



LA TOUR

d'AUVERGNE

By M. C. HARRISON.

"THERE goes your Uncle Harry," exclaimed a chorus of voices, as I passed the school playground; "he has just come home from Europe, and so he ought to be able to tell us all about soldiers and drilling."

"Yes, Uncle Harry," said my nephew Tom, who made himself spokesman for the crowd of boys, "we want to drill like real soldiers,—'shoulder arms!' 'march!' and all that."

"I never was much of a soldier, my boys. I was wounded in one of the battles of our civil war, and so my military career was cut short, but I can tell you a story my grandfather once told me, of a noble soldier whose example of humility and bravery you would do well to follow."

The boys forgot their play in a moment and crowded around me, eager for my story:

"It was on a lovely evening, my grandfather used to say, that he was at the little town of Carhaix in the west of France. A company of stalwart grenadiers was assembled on the parade-ground of the village, and the rays of the setting sun gilded their polished arms. The long roll of the drum ceased, and the roll-call began. Name after name was called, and was echoed by its owner.

"La Tour d'Auvergne.'

No voice responded to that proud name. There was a short silence, and then an old gray-headed color-sergeant, raising his cap as if in salute, stepped forth from the ranks and solemnly answered:

"Dead on the field of honor.'

"When the company had been dismissed, my grandfather sought the veteran and asked if he could tell him the story of La Tour d'Auvergne.

"La Tour d'Auvergne? Yes, sir,' he replied, 'I can tell you all about him. He was born here in Carhaix, in 1743, and I can show you his grave in yonder little church-yard. His parents are buried there, too,' and, as they walked slowly to the church-yard, the old man told the story of the valorous soldier of France, to honor whose memory was his daily duty.

From boyhood, La Tour d'Auvergne longed to be a soldier. He was among the earliest to volunteer when the French revolution began; after the peace of Basle, he fell into the hands of the English, and for a year was a prisoner in England. His name was one of the first enrolled on the glorious list of the grenadiers of France, when Napoleon's bugle-notes sounded. He seldom took part in a battle without distinguishing himself by some heroic action, for which honors were pressed upon him. La Tour d'Auvergne gratefully but firmly refused all honors, declaring his unworthiness of them. He accepted only one favor from his beloved Napoleon. The Senate had offered La Tour d'Auvergne a seat in the legislative body, which he declined, saying, "Where shall I serve the Republic to greater purpose than in the army?" He then rejoined his company of grenadiers, which had become famous under his leadership, with the army of the Rhine, and there he received a letter from

the Minister of War informing him that Napoleon had created him "First Grenadier of the Republic" and had awarded him "a sword of honor." He

within two hours' march of the place where he then was; thought and action were simultaneous with La Tour d'Auvergne, and before the enemy had



WATCHING THE APPROACH OF THE AUSTRIANS.

refused the title, but accepted the sword, which, however, he was never willing to carry into battle.

When La Tour d'Auvergne was about forty years of age, an event occurred which increased his reputation as a soldier who knew not fear. He was sent on important business, so the story goes, to a region far distant from the main body of the army, and he thought it prudent to examine his situation in the event of a surprise from the enemy. While thus engaged, intelligence reached him of the proximity of a regiment of Austrians pushing on to besiege a fort which commanded a narrow pass, the possession of which by the enemy would be very disastrous to the French troops. The pass was ten miles away, and the Austrians were

commenced the ascent of the mountain, he had reached the fort. To his dismay he found it deserted!

Thirty excellent muskets and a large supply of ammunition had been left behind by the fugitives. The lookout in his haste had even left his telescope on the watch-tower; and by the aid of this, La Tour d'Auvergne spied the enemy still far distant. A few hours' detention of the enemy would be invaluable to Napoleon. The pass was steep and narrow. The Austrians could enter it only in double file, and while they were ascending the pass in this order the fire of even a single musket from the fort would be exceedingly effective. These thoughts flashed like lightning

through D'Auvergne's mind, and he descended from the watch-tower with the resolve to attempt the defense of the pass, though alone against a regiment.

Being exhausted, he first took a hasty luncheon; then, barricading the main entrance with all the lumber in the fort, he loaded every gun and placed the ammunition conveniently near. It was dark before his preparations were completed, and there was nothing left for him to do but calmly to await the approach of the Austrians. About midnight he heard the tramp of many feet. In an instant his hand grasped a musket, and when the footfalls came so near that he felt certain the Austrians had entered the pass, he discharged the contents of two guns into the darkness to let them know they

mander summoned the garrison to surrender. La Tour d'Auvergne received the flag of truce.

"Report to your commander," he said, in reply to the messenger, "that the garrison will defend the pass to the last extremity."

The Austrians hesitated no longer, but at once hauled a gun into the pass, and opened fire on the fort. The only situation available for the piece was directly in front of the tower, within easy musket-range. As soon as the gun was placed in position, La Tour d'Auvergne poured so destructive a fire upon the gunners that the enemy were compelled to withdraw after the second discharge, with a loss of five men.

The Austrians were brave men, and a second time boldly followed their leaders up the defile



THE AUSTRIANS ATTACKING THE FORT.

were expected. The shots brought no return fire from the enemy, and from the quick, short commands of the officers, he decided that the ranks of the invaders were thrown into confusion by his ruse. He heard nothing more of them that night. At sunrise the next morning the Austrian com-

but so rapid and accurate was La Tour d'Auvergne's fire, that fifteen men fell in the pass, and the whole body retreated to the foot of the defile. A third assault resulted in further loss to the Austrians, and again they withdrew. By sunset they had lost forty-five men, and at dark the Austrian

commander sent a second demand for surrender. To La Tour d'Auvergne it seemed as if that one day in the tower would never end. Soul and body had almost failed. But what were pain and fatigue to him if he could but accomplish his aim? A

leaving a broad space for the retiring garrison from the fort. All was so quiet within the walls of the fort, and the huge door remained so obstinately closed, that the Austrians were becoming impatient; but at last the heavy door swung slowly



delay of twenty-four hours would, he knew, give ample time for the execution of the important maneuver which the commander of the French army had planned. These precious hours, and more, he would gain if he could hold out against the Austrians until the next day; so after much apparent hesitation he agreed to deliver over the fort at sunrise the following morning on condition that the garrison was allowed to march out with its arms, and to retire unmolested to the French army. These terms were gladly accepted.

At sunrise the next morning the Austrian troops were drawn up in line on either side of the pass,

THE GARRISON MARCHES OUT.

open, and La Tour d'Auvergne appeared, and, staggering under his load of thirty muskets, slowly passed down between the lines of troops. Not a soul followed him from the fort.

Surprised and indignant at this apparent contempt from the conquered foe, the Austrian colonel turned to the grenadier and demanded why the garrison did not appear.

"I am the garrison, Colonel," said La Tour d'Auvergne.

"What!" exclaimed the Colonel, "do you mean to tell me that you have held that tower single-handed against my whole regiment?"

"I have had that honor, Colonel."

"What possessed you to make such an attempt, grenadier?"

"The honor of France was at stake."

With undisguised admiration the Colonel gazed at the hero for some time in silence, then raising his hat he exclaimed:

"Grenadier, I salute you. You have proved yourself the bravest of the brave."

Under a flag of truce, La Tour d'Auvergne returned with the honors of a conqueror to his army, the trophies of his valor borne before him.

The Austrian colonel sent a dispatch, written with his own hand, to the French commander, giving a full account of La Tour d'Auvergne's heroic exploit.

Napoleon would have conferred high rank on La Tour d'Auvergne for his acts of patriotism and bravery, but he steadily refused all honors. The title of "First Grenadier of France," however, bestowed on him by special order of the Emperor, was accepted by friends and foes alike.

La Tour d'Auvergne fell at the battle of Oberhausen, near Neuberg, in Bavaria, June 27, 1800. The honors he so resolutely refused while living were bestowed upon him tenfold after death. A shaft bearing the record of his heroic deeds was erected on the spot where he fell; in his native village a monument was consecrated to his memory; and the simple, touching, memorial ceremony, which was witnessed at the roll-call of his regiment, was instituted, and it was kept up for nearly fifteen years.

"Now, boys," said I, when I had finished the story which my grandfather had told me, "you have heard one of the many brave exploits of this French grenadier. Your books will tell you others as interesting, and convince you that La Tour d'Auvergne was indeed a soldier worth telling about."

HIS MAJESTY THE KING.

BY N. P. BABCOCK.

THAT baby 's a puzzle to me,
With his "queer little snubity nose";
His clothes are put on, I can see,
As thickly as leaves on a rose;
They don't seem to fit
The least little bit,
Yet he has such an air of repose!

They turn him around, upside down,
And dandle him high in the air;
He 's the loveliest baby in town,
The sweetest, in fact, anywhere.
They say "Baby 's King,"
And then shake the poor thing;
It 's a wonder to me how they dare.

Of what earthly use to be king
When all of your subjects are mad,
And imagine a wild Highland fling
Can alone make your majesty glad—
Or fancy a poke
In the chin is a joke
Your highness delights in when sad?

Oh! yes, you 're a puzzle to me,
You solemn-eyed, infantile king;
A bishop might climb up a tree
And *you* would n't say anything,
Though he sat on a bough
And whistled till now,
"The Flowers that Bloom in the Spring."

And yet you will smile at a wink,
Or chuckle aloud at a sneeze,
Though your life is made up, I should think,
Of things more amusing than these;
As when, half the night long,
Your Mamma sings a song
But allows *you* to sound the high Cs.

Perhaps in the far Baby-land,
The joking is finer than here.
Perhaps we can't quite understand
The pre-mundane funny idea.
Perhaps if we knew
What most amused you,
We 'd feel very foolish and queer.